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### THE ILLUSTRATED Sporting and Dramatic News.

#### THE GOLFER'S PROGRESS.

By HENRY LEACH.

A SERIES OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHAT the driving competition at Sandwich began, the rain that has descended from heaven copiously within the last few days will complete, that is, the stifling of much of the agitation—to call it so—for further changes in the official golf ball, on the plea that we drive too far, when not only does the average man drive not far enough to satisfy himself, but it was made clear on this occasion that the gigantic drives of which we have heard so much in recent times have largely been the result of exceptional circumstances. At Sandwich the long holes were certainly not reduced to drives and chips, as most long holes are supposed to be for the big hitters, and yet the turf was firm. Wood was constantly needed for seconds, even when wind was not adverse. On the measurements made in the driving competition it is plain that the game, considered on modern lines, is far removed from ruin. If 260 yards is to be considered the best drive of a first-class golfer when unaided by fortune or retarded by adverse circumstances, and if the moderate among us may give the ball a swipe that will send it 220, then, after all, not much the matter with the case. Sandwich showed up clearly one cause of the long shots we have heard about by the variable lengths obtained from drives by the same men in similar circumstances and conditions. When the turf is firm, and the course heaves and rolls, very much depends on the place where the ball pitches as to the length of run it gets. Let it pitch on an uphill spot—which for the matter of that need be no bigger than the ball itself in area—and its run is checked at once; conversely, if it touches on a downhill patch it slides away into the beautiful distance. Evidently, then, they are wise who derive all the length they can from carry. During the last two seasons, when we have had so much drought, the ball has been given all the chances, and these have contributed to the agitations. Let the rain come down as it has done on some days lately, and the agitators who demand a further clipping of the wings of the ball will hear things that will not please them if they continue. There is an influential section of the authorities who are strongly against any more tinkering with the ball, and it is to be hoped we have heard the last of it.

An Open Championship is really such a complex and comprehensive thing that amid the many events and incidents outside the actual play: the flossam and jetsam, as they might be reckoned, there are curious points for consideration to be found. Certain thoughts came by meandering past the stands of the exhibition of golf materials of every kind, which is now an old-established feature of the meeting, and is as near to the first teeing ground as is permissible and convenient. This year, with its cloths for golfing suits, its golfing shoes and its rubber soles for the same, of which a strong feature was made, and the examples for the support of which might have been brought in by messenger from the course at intervals of a few minutes (the name of Wethered might have been associated with such examples), it seemed to be more generally interesting to the amateur, or general golfer, than previously. Some time ago, at the end of a year, thinking upon what had happened in the season and out of it, we remarked that the most important of all those things was the realisation that rubber soles were the thing for golf, and that for the future nails might better be used for coffins, to which, among other uses, they traditionally belong—or words to that effect—though, to be sure, nails are also traditional in the matter of golfing boots and shoes. It might have seemed then that one was writing lightly, without the desire to be taken seriously, but never was anything more truly said. Half Sandwich was rubber shod during the championship, and half of the remaining half was wishing it had been, despite the rain that had begun to fall at intervals, and was changing the character of the slipperiness of the course. Never have links been so slippery as during the droughts of the past two years, and never had rubber such a chance of asserting its quality. But at the end of the season, when that aforesaid little note was made, hardly a golfer anywhere had discovered the useful fact that his oldest and most comfortable footwear could be converted to golfing purposes by affixing the new patent rubber things, and that the person who did this might walk

home, wholly or partly, when so shod. We had only seen one player of parts all that year who had adopted the idea, which he claimed to have discovered for himself, and which he explained to a smoke room full of people at a leading club in a sort of informal lecture, as the result of which he was considered to be a little eccentric. Now that the rain has begun to fall on the parched courses, and the conditions and complexion of the game are being brought to differ from those we have been familiar with for two or three years, a new advantage seems to come from these rubber soles in their quality of being waterproof or nearly.

Of course there is somehow a sort of "feeling" about rubber on the course that to various folks seems ungodlike, and not only that, but discomfiting, as one might say, in its very softness and comfort, and heads of iron, big and bold, will by them always be preferred. On technical points some considerable arguments might be used against rubber and light shoes for the long and forcing game; but who would say that for the delicacy and exquisite balancing of nervous effort on the putting green the canvas shoe, reinforced with a little leather, as in the case of the Americans, is not, and must not be, the best? But among the championship players of the past, of all kinds and classes, who played with rubber-soled shoes? There may have been others, but the only case that most of us can call to mind at once was that of Mr. Hilton, who was never seen with anything but white about his feet. And of the golfers of the medieval period of the game, he was the one who gave most scientific and other consideration to the game, and thought things out, being in this way the forerunner, as it were, of the super-thinking Americans of to-day, and he was the most successful. The Americans, who have given the most serious consideration to this department of the equipment, are in a large majority for lightness combined with firmness on the feet, which they achieve by the canvas shoes, usually rubber-soled, belted round with bands of leather. Among the many questions that British golfers had better look into, which they have undoubtedly treated carelessly and thoughtlessly in the past, is that of footwear, not seeming to realise the enormous difference that may occur in the play as the result of employing what may be called good or bad. They will do so now that for only the second time in history the Championship has been won in canvas and rubber shoes. Not one person in ten seems to understand that a change of socks or stockings at the lunch interval in a whole day's golf, even though the weather were fine, is often worth a hole or two in the afternoon.

There is another thought concerning Sandwich The chief course of southern England, having elected Mr. Travis and Walter Hagen to championship distinction, is gathering a reputation, as it would seem, for this foreign favouritism, even though Sandwich is one of the last courses one could think of that might be considered as helpful to the game of the Americans. But championships with such results necessitate, as it would appear, special speeches, and Lord Northbourne, to whose lot as lord of the manor it fell to present the Amateur cup to Mr. Travis and the Open cup to Hagen, will doubtless feel it desirable to read all the excellent things that are being said and written at the present time about our relations with America, apropos of the visit to our hospitable shores of various admirable Americans like Mr. Taft, so that he may have the best and most diplomatic points at his disposal for future contingencies—not that his cup-delivering orations at present are lacking in style and interest. That which he delivered in 1904, when the redoubtable Travis came and conquered, was an excellent dissertation on the historic interest of Sandwich and the use that the Romans and other adventurers had made of it. In those days there was no occasion to stress the importance of good Anglo-American sentiment. But if the presenter of cups excels in oratory, the responders may be remarkable for a peculiar laconism. Mr. Travis said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am bunkered!" and so took the cup away. Hagen, indeed, accustomed as he is to public speaking on such occasions, said a few appropriate words, as appropriate as could be, though a living phrase could never inspire him as it inspired Arnaud Massy, the golfer of France, when he won the Open Championship at Hoylake in 1907, and, holding the cup on high, exclaimed: "Vive l'entente cordiale!" That cry was as good as Massy's drives and putts. Sandwich on this occasion produced another curiosity in oratory, again of the intensely laconic order, to which we have seen no reference made as yet, partly, we apprehend, through a mistaken idea of delicacy. This was the oration of Duncan, which ought, indeed, to be regarded as the most famous of all championship orations for its terseness, its force, and the artistic perfection of its precise suitability to the occasion. Duncan, we believe, still suffering keenly from a sense of disappointment and of the might-have-been, was averse to making any public utterance when invited to do so, feeling that that was the time for silence and reflection. But it was submitted to him that it would be nice and respectful to the distinguished company if he made some sort of speech in acknowledgment of the kind and interesting things that had been said. So then George Duncan, having addressed the chair and company, added only one word, thereby displaying his genius for selection of the appropriate sentiment. It was admirable, said with a smile, and it will live. Far be it from us to attempt any feeble reproduction with ink and paper of the effect achieved, which delighted everyone. It were better that the sense should be conveyed delicately to the reader by such expedients as the performers with acrostics adopt. Duncan's one-word speech consisted of but four letters. His first was, we might say naturally, the first of his own name. Equally naturally, his second was the initial of the friendly nation that had just wreaked conquest o'er the Sandwich dunes. His third might be described as the second of the second we have just been referring to, and it also stands for a club much used in the short game, while his fourth falls alphabetically hot upon the heels of the third, and besides

being the final of the Duncan oration is the very last also of the name of the victor of the meeting. It also, curiously enough, represents a club used in the short and other games. Those who think may know, and when British golfers as yet unborn have it told to them how Duncan at the crisis did his 69 and failed, the glorious story may be rounded off with a detail of the oration and a chuckle with it.

One of the inevitable reflections on the recent excitement concerned the caddies, for these human adjuncts to the game seemed to be present in more than their usual variety at championships, and the variety is always great. It is increased now through the mixture of the old and the new, and it was not difficult in watching the play of any couple to discover whether their carriers belonged to the pre-war race of caddies, and were therefore real caddies, with a soul for the game as well as a knowledge of it, or whether they were of the post-war kind, who for the most part regard golf as a system of profiteering in their own humble way, and would as lief invest their money in Russia as have a sixpence or a shilling on their man, and curse him inwardly when he made a bad stroke, as was the happy habit of the caddies we enjoyed in the days when golf was a simpler and more glorious thing. The matter had a special interest for the immediate future in the case of a majority of the onlookers, for the busy time of their own game on holiday courses approaches, and the trials of last season in this respect are still heavy in the mind. Clubs and caddie masters do badly who do not insist on fair treatment and civility from the new caddies on whom the game, with unemployment what it is, is not so dependent as it was two or three seasons back. Our suggestion that clubs, and especially seaside clubs where visitors will congregate in the next few weeks, should organise and train a corps of selected caddies, making them a guarantee if necessary, has been well noticed in various quarters, and experience of modern times and tendencies increases its apparent value. In many places now, perhaps in most, the caddies, after being paid at double pre-war rates, or nearly, are not satisfied—and are frequently offensive—unless a shilling instead of a sixpenny tip is given them besides, and for clubs to be cleaned as the old caddies cleaned them is a thing unknown. The condition of things is very unsatisfactory, and golfers and their club committees are to blame for it. The players who, being richer for the war, or thinking less of their money anyhow, pay extraordinary rates and give gigantic tips to their caddies, are more blameworthy than others, and action might be taken against them. One hears at some clubs of as much as a pound a day being given by various persons to their selected caddies, whom they wish to be retained for them.



MR. G. TWEEDALE (WILMSLOW), who beat Mr. J. E. Hassall (Bromborough) in the final for the Cheshire Championship at Prenton, Birkenhead, last week. Mr. Tweedale was the holder of the title.



THE HON. MICHAEL SCOTT,

who last week won the French Open Amateur Golf Championship at Le Touquet, when he beat Mr. Bernard Drew (Stoke Poges) in the final. The Hon. Michael Scott is a former Open Golf Champion of Australia, and a former French Amateur Champion.

(Continued on page 762.)